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360zine

Issue 19 | June 2008

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**NINJA GAIDEN II
SUPPLEMENT**

MASSIVE REVIEW

ENEMY TERRITORY: QUAKE WARS

**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
NINJA GAIDEN II**

PLUS!
RACE DRIVER: GRID
Full review

PREVIEW
**SBK08
SUPERBIKE WORLD
CHAMPIONSHIP**

HANDS-ON
**THE BOURNE
CONSPIRACY**



CONTROL →





Welcome to 360Zine

Doom and Quake are two of those gaming legends that still send shivers down my spine, so it's no surprise that Enemy Territory: Quake Wars was received with some anticipation when it arrived in the office, just days before going to 'press'. Kieron Gillen had the honour of reviewing it so don't miss his definitive verdict. Also reviewed this issue, Codemasters continues in strong style with the release of Race Driver: GRID.

Elsewhere we have an exclusive interview with Ninja Gaiden II's Tomonobu Itagaki, extended hands-on previews of Bourne Conspiracy, and SBK-08 Superbike World Championship, along with first look previews of Banjo Kazooie: Nuts and Bolts; Viva Pinata: Trouble In Paradise; and Spectral Force 3.

Enjoy the issue...

Dan Hutchinson, Editor
360zine@gamerzines.com

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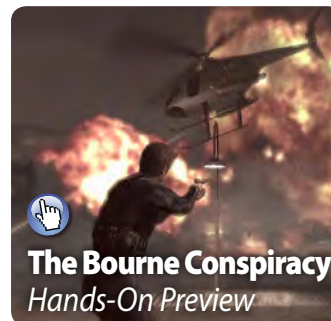
**Chris
Schilling**
Was Bourne to kill



Steve Hill
Had the pleasure of
Ninja Gaiden II



Kieron Gillen
See what he makes of
Quake Wars



The Bourne Conspiracy
Hands-On Preview

Don't miss! *This month's top highlights*



Enemy Territory: Quake Wars

MASSIVE REVIEW



Ninja Gaiden II

Exclusive Interview



Race Driver: GRID

Will it take the chequered flag?



Banjo Kazooie: Nuts & Bolts

First Look Preview

QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away!

Banjo Kazooie:
Nuts & Bolts
Viva Pinata: Trouble
in Paradise
Spectral Force 3
Gears of War 2
Fable 2
Destroy all Humans:
Path of the Furon
Smash Court

Tennis 3
Dead Space
Bayonetta
The Bourne
Conspiracy
Ninja Gaiden II
SBK-08
Enemy Territory:
Quake Wars
Race Driver: GRID

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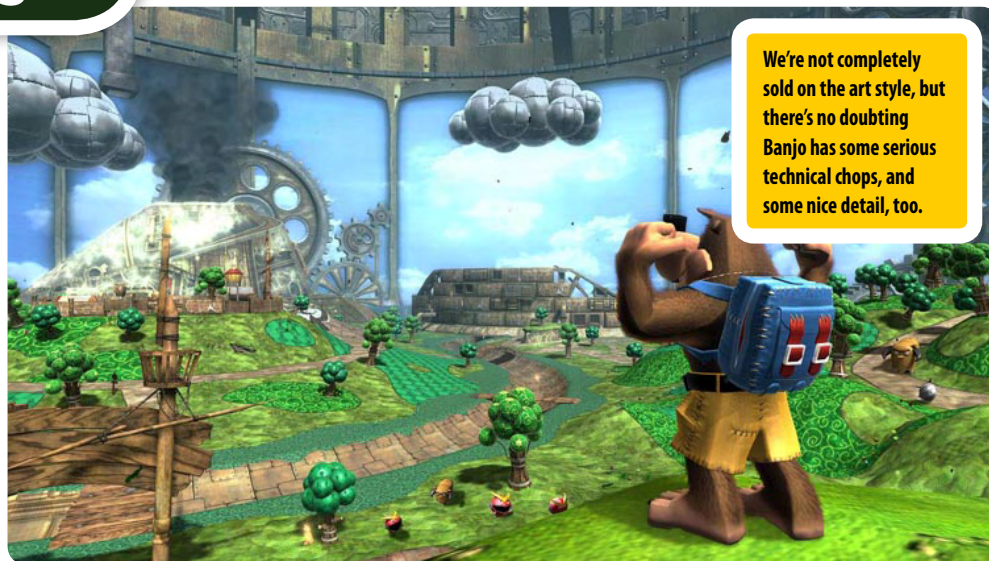
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We recommend you close and re-open the magazine and select "Play" when asked about the multimedia to enjoy the magazine as intended.



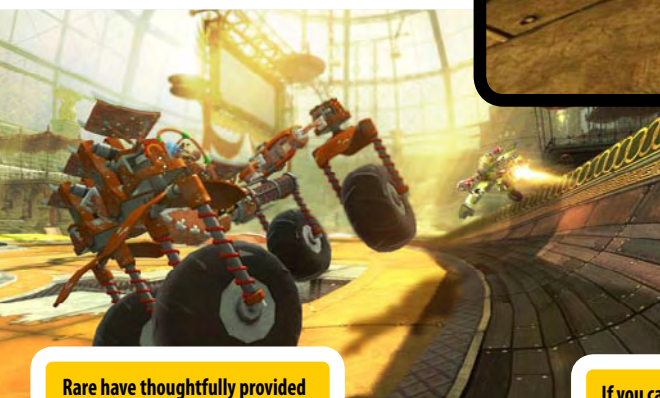


Publisher: Microsoft
Developer: Rare
Heritage: Goldeneye,
Perfect Dark
Link: <http://banjo-kazooie.com>
ETA: Christmas



We're not completely sold on the art style, but there's no doubting Banjo has some serious technical chops, and some nice detail, too.

"The idea is that you can create any vehicle you want with a simple assembly system"



Rare have thoughtfully provided a set of co-operative and competitive challenges alongside the sizeable single-player mode.

If you can imagine it, you can build it – assuming you have the right pieces, that is.



FIRST LOOK

Banjo Kazooie: Nuts & Bolts

Building the perfect platformer

What's the story?

Back in the days of Nintendo's N64 console, Rare's Banjo Kazooie was a superb 3D platformer that was beaten only by Nintendo's own Super Mario 64 – which still remains one of the finest 3D platformers you'll ever play. With Mario Galaxy currently wowing Wii owners the world over, the developer has taken a completely different tack this time, with a central mechanic that's more Meccano than Mario.

What do we know?

We're more than happy to dish out massive dollops of kudos to Rare for trying something completely different, and from what we've seen so far, the new approach may be a stroke of genius. The idea is that you can create any vehicle you want with a simple assembly system, from parts you discover as you explore the huge levels. These can range from four wheelers which can negotiate rocky landscapes and spring-bounce over obstacles, to winged vehicles which allow you to ascend to previously unreachable heights. It all seems to work brilliantly, and offers a genuine alternative to the gravity-defying leaps and bounds of Galaxy.

When do we get more?

It's out at Christmas, there'll probably be a demo before that, and we're hoping to get a lengthier hands-on with the game between now and then.

Anything else to declare?

The Rare team has created almost all the major Star Wars vehicles with the game's construction set, as well as the USS Enterprise, and the Challenger shuttle with detachable rockets. Wow.

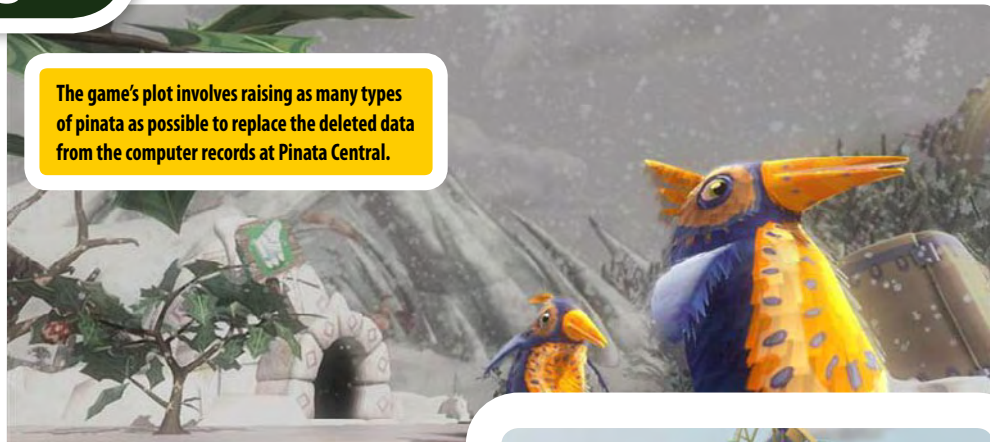
PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of Banjo Kazooie: Nuts & Bolts





Publisher: Microsoft
Developer: Rare
Heritage: Perfect Dark
Zero, Grabbed by
the Ghoulies
Link: www.xbox.com/en-US/games/v/vptip
ETA: September

The game's plot involves raising as many types of pinata as possible to replace the deleted data from the computer records at Pinata Central.



Micromanagement won't be quite as intense and complex as before, making it easier for new gamers to play.



**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to tell
us what you
think of Viva
Pinata: Trouble
in Paradise



There's more variety in the environments than in the original, and the new species of pinata mean it should appeal to those who loved the first as much as newcomers.

"There's a genuinely innovative use of the Xbox Live Vision camera"



FIRST LOOK

Viva Pinata: Trouble in Paradise

The sweet-scatterers return in this gorgeous sequel

What's the story?

The original Viva Pinata didn't quite perform as well as expected (nor sell as much as it clearly deserved to), but it did manage to pick up a large enough following for Microsoft to fund a sequel. The one problem with the first game was its relative inaccessibility to the younger gamers it was clearly geared towards. Rectifying that issue is just one of several key changes Rare has made this time. And so far the results are looking very promising indeed.

What do we know?

It arguably looks even nicer than the gorgeous original, but it's the gameplay that's seen the most improvements. 32 new pinatas are featured, and there's a genuinely innovative use of the Xbox Live Vision camera. The peripheral allows you to scan specially printed cards to drop content into the game, but you can also customise pinatas, take a snap in the game's new photo mode and send them to your friends' gardens. A Just For Fun option makes things easier for youngsters, while a new co-operative two-player mode is the icing on a particularly feature-packed cake.

When do we get more?

The pinatas return in September. As with Banjo, we're hoping to spend more time with the game before its release. And when we have more information to share then we promise that you'll be the first to know.

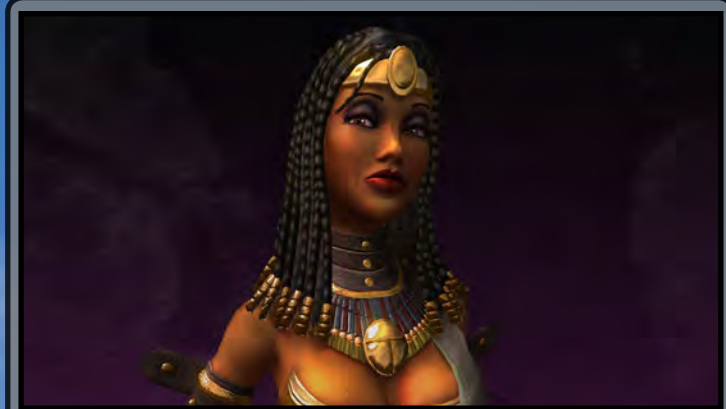
Anything else to declare?

Themed object packs giving you further customisation options, and a trick-teaching system which uses the right stick to let your pinatas show off helps to round off the impressive list of new features.



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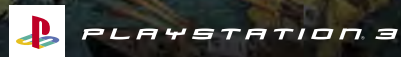


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13 June 2008



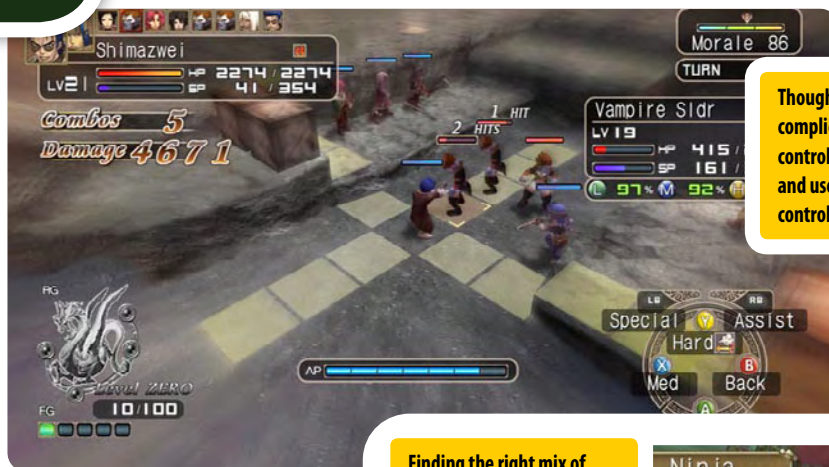
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Publisher: Atlus
Developer: Idea Factory
Heritage: Blazing Souls,
Chaos Wars
Link: www.atlus.com/spectralforce3
ETA: Q3 2008



Though it's a complicated game, its controls are intuitive, and use the 360 controller sensibly.



The visuals are functional rather than spectacular, though the 2D anime character art impresses.

Finding the right mix of team members is key to success. Ninjas are agile, but are best used alongside more powerful recruits to protect them from damage.

STATUS			
STR	15	ATK	128
STM	9	DEF	94
INT	4	MAG	42
RES	6	MGR	56
AGI	18	ACC	30
LCK	7	EVA	25
	-50		25



PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of Spectral Force 3

FIRST LOOK

Spectral Force 3

Meet the new ghost squad

What's the story?

Localisation kings Atlus are bringing this quirky Japanese strategy RPG to the west. It tells the intriguing tale of a band of mercenaries, fighting other warring factions in a mythical world called Neverland. It shouldn't be confused with Peter Pan's home though, as this is a dark, dangerous place where humans and demons fight for dominance.

What do we know?

Well, if you've ever played games like the excellent Disgaea or Final Fantasy Tactics (and there's a pretty good chance that you have), then you'll have a fair idea of what to expect here. Spectral Force uses a grid-based system that's similar to the aforementioned titles for its movement and battling, the latter of which should provide plenty of variety, given that there are a total of forty recruitable characters for your party to collect, and each has his or her own unique offensive moves. Its whopping 150 missions span around fifty hours of gameplay, ensuring that you'll get excellent value for money here, too.

When do we get more?

It's hitting the US at the end of July, and will likely reach the UK within a few months of its Stateside launch.

Anything else to declare?

As with most S-RPGs, you'll be able to combine components to forge your own accessories and weapons. With ten different factions taking part in the Great Neverland War, you'll certainly have your work cut out staying on top, especially if the series' tough difficulty level has been maintained.



INCOMING

A fistful of top new titles coming to 360...



Gears of War 2

Publisher: Microsoft | **ETA:** November

CliffyB promised 'bigger, better and more badass', and from the latest footage, that appears to be exactly what Epic has delivered. Okay, it doesn't appear to deviate too much from the gameplay template, but what's wrong with another dose of thrillingly fast-paced, balls-out action?



Fable 2

Publisher: Microsoft | **ETA:** Winter

Sensibly, Peter Molyneux seems to be under some kind of gagging order, preventing him from waxing lyrical about what he'd like to put in Fable 2. Meanwhile, what is there appears to be looking gorgeous, and with several gameplay innovations new to the RPG genre, this should be yet another smash for Microsoft this winter.

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us the games you're waiting for...

Destroy all Humans: Path of the Furon

Publisher: THQ | **ETA:** Q4 2008

Having effectively lampooned the Fifties and Sixties with the previous Destroy All Humans titles, THQ has moved another decade forward in this threequel. While Big Willy Unleashed for the Wii disappointed, the extra development time this has been given leaves us optimistic that it can more than match up to its illustrious predecessors.



Smash Court Tennis 3

Publisher: Namco-Bandai | **ETA:** June

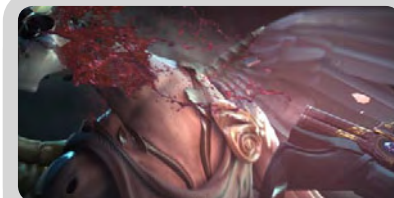
It's almost summer, which means it's tennis season. While perennial favourite Top Spin 3 dusts down its whites and prepares to make up for the disappointing second game, Namco-Bandai's Smash Court series also makes a welcome return. But can it compete with the big boys? We'll soon find out.



Dead Space

Publisher: Electronic Arts | **ETA:** 31st October

EA's space-set horror is coming along very nicely indeed, with some even more horrifying alien creatures awaiting those gamers brave enough to pick this up at Halloween. EA clearly has a lot of confidence in this – with a comic book series and animated prequel in the works, this will likely be one of Q4's biggest titles.



Bayonetta

Publisher: Sega | **ETA:** Early 2009

It's a way off yet, but Bayonetta – from Sega's recently announced partnership with ace Japanese developer Platinum Games – is already looking very exciting indeed. It's a third-person actioner from the creator of Devil May Cry, featuring a female protagonist who is a witch with guns on her feet. How can it not be amazing?

UPCOMING

JULY

● Wall-E – 4th July

● Soul Calibur – 31st July

AUGUST

● Brothers in Arms Hell's Highway

● Space Chimps

SEPTEMBER

● Supreme Commander – 5th September

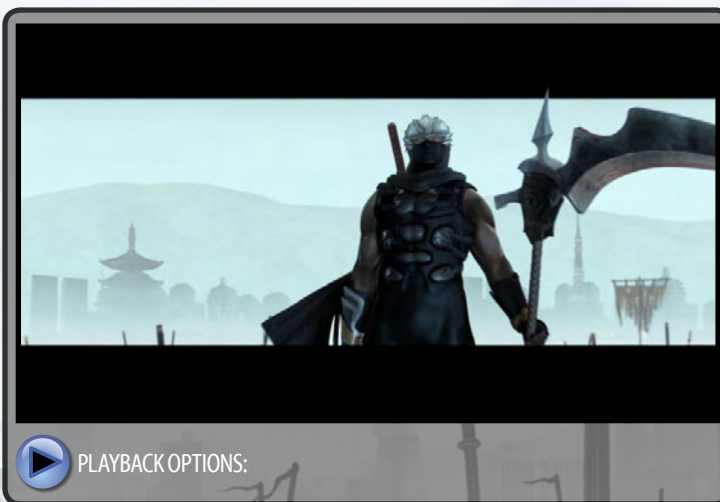
● Midnight Club: LA – 12th September

AUTUMN

● Rock Revolution

● Velvet Assassin

NINJA GAIDEN



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Microsoft



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HANDS ON

The Bourne Conspiracy

He's a lean, mean killing machine

If we weren't excited enough about Bourne before, we certainly are now. Now we've had some (admittedly all too brief) hands-on time with the game, we're confident in saying that it's easily one of the best movie tie-ins of recent years.

The first thing that hits you is the cinematic intensity of the action. Developer High Noon has certainly managed to capture the spirit of the Bourne films, particularly the high-octane, rapid-cut fight sequences. It helps that the graphics are tremendous – large, detailed, characterful, well-animated human models battering each other senseless looks ace in glorious close-up, capturing every smashed nose and black eye from the shuddering, impactful punches. Plenty of times you'll wince at the sheer bone-breaking power of the blows, further enhanced by the almost explosive sound effects, making every body punch feel like a potential ribcage-



The Mini returns – the films' amazing car chase sequences will be tricky to pull off, though.

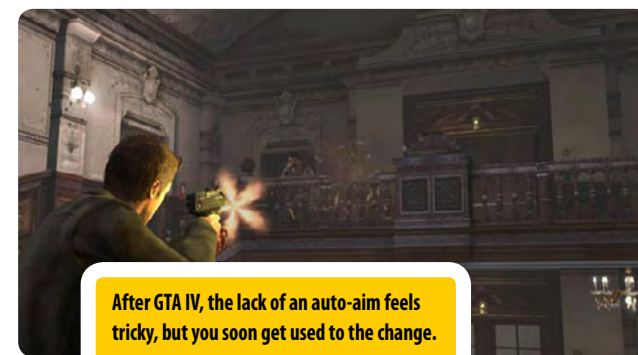
crusher. Your commands are relatively limited, but given the blistering pace of the brawls, that's probably a very good thing – blocking is as simple as holding A, while you can move the analogue stick at the same time to dodge, before following up with a quick jab or four on

the X button (repeated hits spark brutal combos) or heavier assaults with Y.

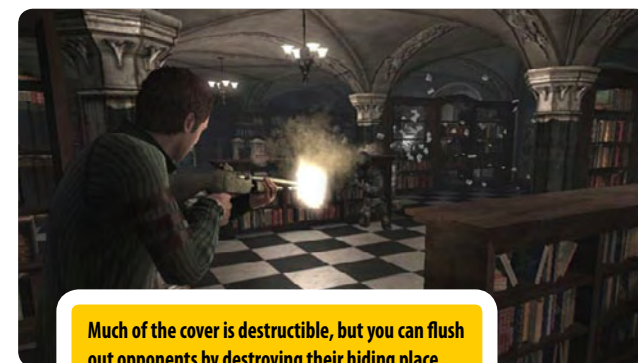
Injure your opponent enough and you can perform a context-sensitive takedown – jab B to see a swift cutaway as Bourne caves his opponents' faces in with fire



"The first thing that hits you is the cinematic intensity of the action"



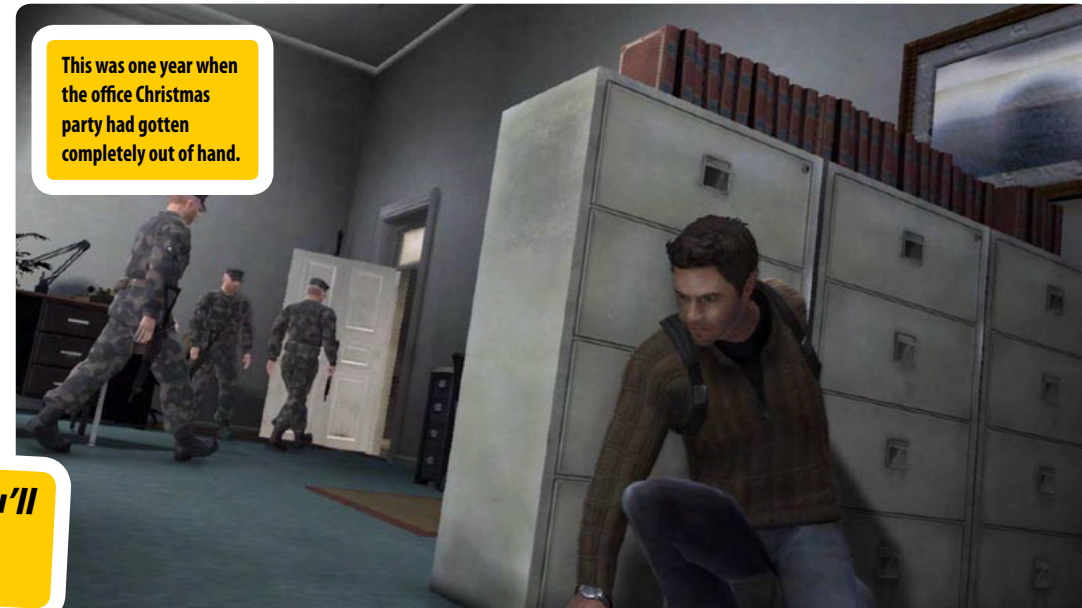
After GTA IV, the lack of an auto-aim feels tricky, but you soon get used to the change.



Much of the cover is destructible, but you can flush out opponents by destroying their hiding place.



Character models are nice and large, which gives the fights that 'up close and personal' feel.



This was one year when the office Christmas party had gotten completely out of hand.



Bourne has been targeted, but the laser sight is a bit of a giveaway.

"To spice things up you'll come across several quick-time events"

>The Bourne Conspiracy continued

extinguishers, books, shoving heads into walls or through windows, or simply bludgeoning them with any

blunt instrument to hand. It's vicious, bloody and gasp-inducingly violent, but quite amazingly satisfying at the same time. Somehow the frenetic pace and juddering cinematography has been realised almost perfectly, without ever leaving the player wondering

where he or she is. Rapid cuts between fights and shaky-cam as every fist or foot connects makes it feel exactly like the Bourne films.

It's almost certainly true to say that Conspiracy is at its best when Jason Bourne is unarmed – even the sneaking or running between hand-to-hand scraps is exciting, thanks to the fantastic orchestral soundtrack setting your pulse racing at every opportunity. It remains to be seen whether High Noon can keep this up for a whole game, but the section we've played is a real appetite-whetter.

To spice things up a little while you're being pursued, you'll come up against several quick-time events, most of which are fairly forgiving, with only one or two giving you a very short time to jab whichever button is displayed. The implementation of this is just

about spot on – it's clear without being too distracting, allowing you to see the action and the button-press required simultaneously. You'll never miss a piece of the action because you've been staring at the controller or concentrating on an icon rather than watching events unfold – major kudos to High Noon for that.

If the QTEs are perhaps a little frequent at times, then it's actually rather fitting considering the quick edits between shots in the films, and the rapid nature of Bourne's own manoeuvres. Like the titular assassin, you have to think fast, and react even faster – and with checkpoints very well-spaced, you'll never be sent back too far if you fail. Or should that be when? It's not an easy game by any stretch.

When Bourne gets hold of a gun, the action becomes just a little more





I'd duck just about now if I was him...

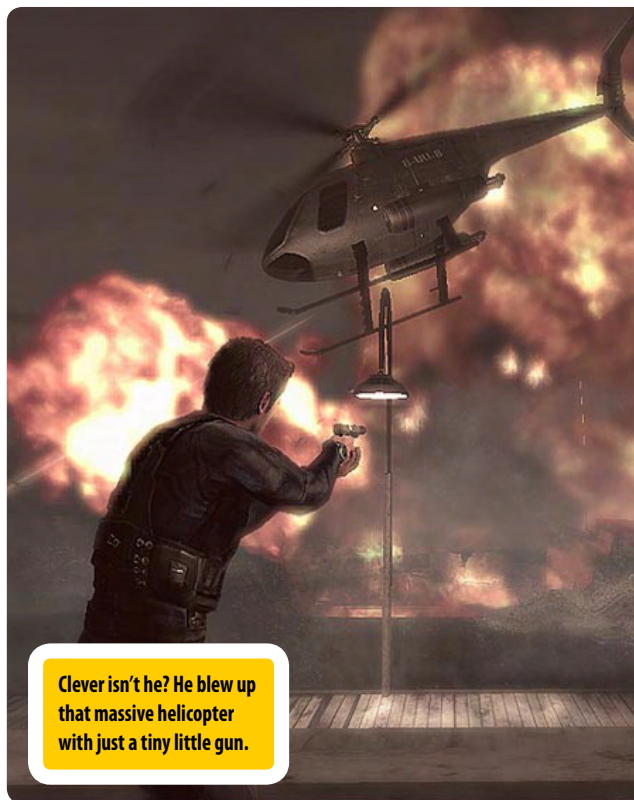


>The Bourne Conspiracy continued

generic, though admittedly still very solid and thrillingly cinematic. Pressing the left bumper to draw your weapon, you need to make clever use of cover to get past some fairly heavily-armoured enemies – the A button sticking Bourne to the nearest available wall, crate or other obstacle. The lack of auto-targeting makes the shooting more difficult, forcing you to hide your time to take aim and fire – and given that your enemies are bullet sponges at the best of times, headshots are the answer to your biggest problems.

You'll need to make judicious use of Bourne's adrenaline – pressing Y heightens his senses, making enemies easier to spot, and seemingly slightly simpler to eliminate. And if you've got enough, you can press B for a super-effective shooting takedown, which

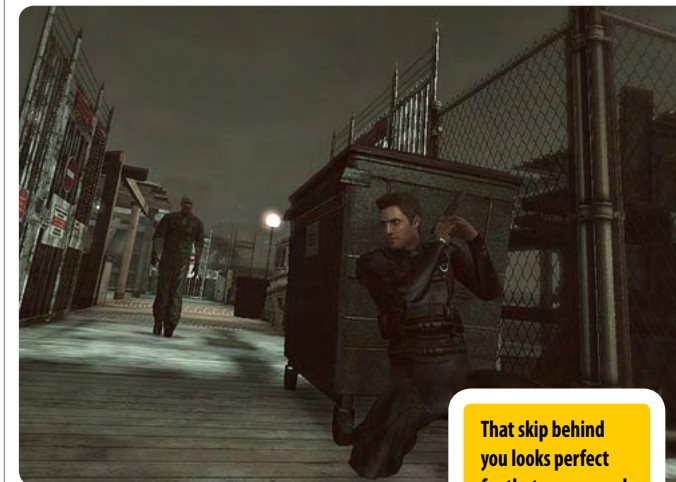
"A super-effective takedown move can often see Bourne remove two foes with one button press"



Clever isn't he? He blew up that massive helicopter with just a tiny little gun.



If you're facing multiple assailants, you're best ensuring there's no-one left behind you.



That skip behind you looks perfect for that goon guard walking toward you. I think you know what to do...

can often see Bourne remove two foes with one simple button press. That might make things a little too easy for some, but the accuracy of your enemies means you'll be thankful for their inclusion.

Get in close enough, and you'll be able to go into hand-to-hand mode once more – this happens automatically, which can be a little unnerving when you're facing off against multiple gun-wielding opponents. In which case, you can try something really clever – like turning your assailant around so his mates have to shoot him before they can get to you. Most of the time they'll hold their fire, but occasionally Bourne will be able to use his sparring partner as a shield, once again leading to some 'only in the movies' moments which add to the sense of excitement.

If you've watched the Bourne films then you'll know that there's a tremendous car chase in each – and Conspiracy doesn't disappoint on that





You'll often need to smash windows to progress – Bourne isn't one for opening doors quietly when he can storm a room, guns blazing!



"It's clear that Conspiracy's developer has taken more than a few cues from the film trilogy"



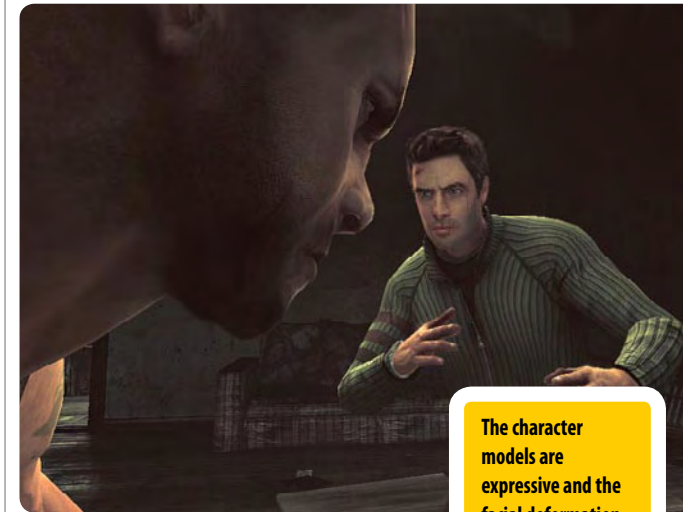
Press the Y button and Bourne's instinct will highlight objects in the local area that can be used in battle. The environmental takedowns are a delight to pull off.

>The Bourne Conspiracy continued

front, either. Though we've not seen enough of the driving sections to make an entirely fair judgement on their quality, the controls and visuals once again seem extremely solid as Bourne zips through the streets at high speed, attempting to evade his pursuers. Though there are prescribed areas you have to pass through, you're able to take any route to get there – often you'll be able to throw chasing cars off the scent by using the emergency brake to skid into narrow alleyways, and you'll once again find some well-directed QTEs which see Bourne pull off the kind of manoeuvres that'd earn most people an instant driving ban.

Despite its use of author Robert Ludlum's novels as its source material, it's clear that Conspiracy's developer has taken more than a few cues from the film trilogy – and to superb effect. While most licensed titles mix different styles of gameplay, this is the first one for quite a while which seems to do it effectively, refusing to compromise on the quality of any of its three disparate gameplay types. A question mark remains over its reliance on those quick-time events, but if it can keep

**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to tell us what you think of The Bourne Conspiracy



The character models are expressive and the facial deformation really makes you feel like you've been in a punch-up.

up the amazing sense of pacing that makes the films so heart-poundingly intense – and it manages that in the levels we've manage to play through with room to spare – then this is one conspiracy we can believe in. ●

360Zine



HOW COMPLETE?

95%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

85%

At last, a licensed game to look forward to



"POWERED BY ADRENALINE!"



THE OFFICIAL VIDEOGAME
SBK08
 SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP



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CONTROL →

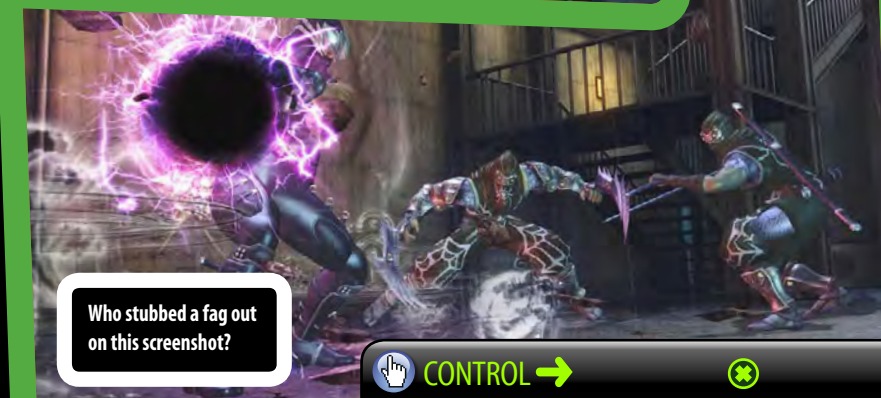


NINJA GAIDEN II

*Steve Hill pins down legendary developer **Tomonobu Itagaki** for some Ninja natter...*



Ninja Swingball is a dangerous business.



Who stubbed a fag out on this screenshot?



That's what you call a head cold.

Does the story follow on from the first game? What is the story?

I would say that even more than carrying on from the first game, that it actually precedes the old Ninja Gaiden series from the NES days.

Can you tell us how the new combat system works – the Obliteration technique?

The Obliteration technique is a system that is designed to make you look quite cool. When you pull off a move you think wow, look at how great I am!

One of the things that we can say to prove that the game's not just about violence is in the Obliteration technique, because the object is to finish off your enemy and put him out of his misery.

One criticism levelled at the previous game was the difficulty level. Do you accept that it was a too hard and how have you rectified that in number two?

I do agree that the first game was difficult. What I'd like to say about Ninja Gaiden II is that it's important to think not only of the game as easy or hard, it's also important to say is it fun or is it not fun? So what we tried to do with Ninja Gaiden II is decrease the absolute level of difficulty on one hand, but on the other also make the game more fun just in itself so that you feel you're improving as you're playing and it's more enjoyable. That being said, we do have harder difficulty levels for the people who want them.

"The Obliteration technique is a system that is designed to make you look quite cool"



He'll have someone's eye out with that if he's not careful...



That's his 5-a-side days over, then

"Working with the power of the 360 has enhanced the visual fidelity of the game"

> Interview continued

What about the auto-healing system that the game has? Does that go some way towards making it more accessible?

Yes, that's correct.

It is particularly violent, too. The European release of Ninja Gaiden didn't have all the violence in it, but Europe gets the full version for the sequel. Do you think this level of violence is acceptable? Does it add something to the experience?

I think that when you see the detailed results of the game, then that will probably speak for itself.

Ninjas are very traditional, but you have very modern settings in the game, with jet planes and so on. Did you plan that to be a deliberate juxtaposition – old school ninjas and the modern world?

Yeah, we basically approach it from a viewpoint, asking what would it look like if there were ninjas in the present day, and we're trying to aim for that contrast between those two worlds.

What is the essence of the ninja code, for people who don't know too much about the folklore? Ninjas are these mythical beings, what is the back-story behind them?

They are a group of people who have deliberately removed themselves from society and they don't act on any sort of impulses for justice or good or evil or anything like that. They act only to survive for their own interests regardless of society as a whole.

What has working on the 360 brought to the game? Is it a good platform to work on and what has it added to the experience?

Yeah, I definitely think working with the power of the 360 has enhanced not only the visual fidelity of the game but also the playability aspect as well.

Finally, is this the end of the series? Can it really be the end for the Ninja Gaiden games?

I won't personally be making any more myself. Perhaps if there's someone who is capable of continuing the series then maybe they will. ●



TOMONOBU ITAGAKI

After joining Tecmo in 1992 as a programmer, Itagaki made his breakthrough in 1996 with Dead or Alive, and in 2001 he became head of Team Ninja. Updating the ancient NES games, Ninja Gaiden was a somewhat more violent affair, and its success has spawned the inevitable sequel and possibly the last game in the series...



Publisher: Tecmo
Developer: Team NINJA
Heritage: Dead or Alive 4, Dead or Alive: Xtreme 2
Link: www.ninjadengame.com
ETA: 6th June

"BE EXCITED.
BE VERY EXCITED." – Games TM

"ENEMY TERRITORY: QUAKE WARS
IS SURE TO ROCK YOUR WORLD"

– X360 Magazine



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CONTROL →





THE OFFICIAL VIDEOGAME
SBK-08
SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Publisher: Black Bean
Developer: Milestone
Heritage: S.C.A.R., Corvette
Evolution GT
Link: www.sbkthegame.com
ETA: 20th June

HANDS ON

SBK-08 Superbike World Championship

Two wheels good?

Motorcycle sims are the choice of the true racing connoisseur. Not for these purists the procession of four-wheelers round a painfully obvious set of tracks. No, the true test of any racing fan's mettle is a bike simulation. And the more realistic the better, thank you.

It's fair to say that SBK-08 is targeted towards a fairly niche audience, but that's not saying that it only deserves to be a minor success. In fact, it does everything within its power to ensure that beginners aren't completely left

behind at the starting grid, choking on their opponents' exhaust fumes. While there's plenty that's expressly tailored towards the true hardcore (and more about those options later), it's what it offers novice riders that goes above and beyond what you'd traditionally expect from the genre.

While those experienced on two wheels will likely plump for a full race weekend simulation, with qualifying and all the racing aids turned off, there are Instant Action and Quick Race options for those who just want to get on with the business of beating their rivals to the finish line. With a whopping 21 opponents, that's not going to be easy, so fortunately Milestone has included a Rookie difficulty mode for those cutting their teeth on winding tracks like Magny-Cours or the horrendous hairpins

Even if you're struggling to keep up with the leading pack, there are plenty of mini-races throughout. Jostling for the eighth-place position has rarely felt as much fun.

"There's plenty here tailored towards the true hardcore racer"



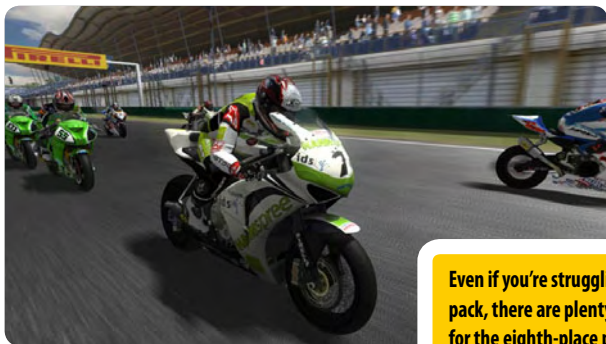
Lean too far into a turn and you'll fall over – that's yet another factor to consider when approaching a bend.



The race replays are genuinely impressive to watch.



This is the best view to really get a good sensation of speed – on some corners you need to slow down so much you almost feel like you're riding through treacle.



>SBK-08 continued

of Vallelunga. A very welcome set of tutorials eases you into the straight into the bike's handling – a little twitchy, but hugely effective when you're accustomed to the controls – while a wealth of game options allows you to tweak settings such as bike damage, aided brakes, tyre wear, and even your rider's health!

Meanwhile, a set of scenarios, with more unlocked as you complete these challenges, are available – ranging from a straightforward head-to-head with a rival as you enter the closing stages of a race, to attempting a thrilling comeback or maintaining your lead with a damaged bike.

The learning curve is admittedly a fairly steep one. Move away from the rookie level, and you'll initially find your opponents moving away from you – and at quite a rate of knots, too. Yet perseverance pays dividends. Ride sensibly, braking often – far more so than you would in most car racing sims – and you'll soon be keeping up with the pack, gradually shaving seconds off your lap times each race until you're competing with the big boys on a regular basis.

Graphics are a mixed bag – the riders and their vehicles are extremely detailed, and look particularly impressive in the post-race replays (which show selected highlights of overtaking manoeuvres and crashes



Be careful not to get too close to your opponents – it's all too easy to nudge their rear end which can send both of you spinning onto the gravel traps.

rather than the full race), but the backgrounds are fairly bland and featureless. It's a sacrifice worth making for the framerate though, which is solid throughout. One particularly nice effect comes from the raindrops on your display that spread outwards across your screen as you increase speed. Sound wise it's business as usual – the revving engines sounds like a cluster of angry hornets. Those who watch Superbike races on TV will know exactly what to expect here.

Can it secure a brand new audience though? We'll have to wait and see about that one. While SBK-08 makes large strides towards providing a

worthwhile experience for all, it's difficult to see the mass market picking up such a title. But if you're a racing sim fan who fancies a change from cars, then you've definitely come to the right place. ●

Even if you're struggling to keep up with the leading pack, there are plenty of mini-races throughout.



**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
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tell us what
you think of
SBK-08



The official game of snooker produced with Infinite Worlds™ & new Real mode.

"Now that's interesting!"

PLAY FOR
real



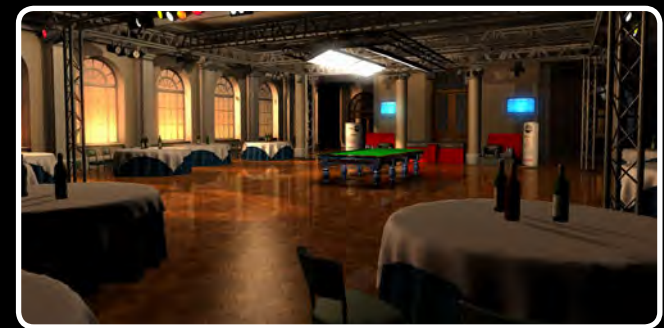
"It goes like a rocket!"



PC PLAYSTATION3 Wii XBOX 360 LIVE PSP

'It's a tour de force of how sports games should look.'
X360 Gamer

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Publisher: Activision

Developer: Nerve

Software/Id Software

Heritage: Quake, Doom

Link: www.quakewars.com

OUT NOW

Enemy Territory: Quake Wars

It's the game which puts the Strogg in Stroganoff. That's not right

The online battlefields of the 360 are getting crowded. Without even getting into the second-raters, the machine's got more quality first-person shooters than any console in history. From Team Fortress 2 to Call of Duty to Halo, the amount of hot lead being fired around the Internet is getting a little out of control. Which makes games trying to find their niche either brave or foolish, or both. It's a high-stakes strategy – for a game which is mostly an online experience, if it doesn't secure an audience almost immediately then it's relatively useless for anyone who put their money down to play.

It's especially true for Enemy Territory: Quake Wars, which is a game of two halves. Except the two halves aren't actually 'half'. The multiplayer is an enormous 12-foot man and the single-player is about 24 inches tall, but looks terribly similar. Basically, online it's a team-based shooter with up to six-players. Offline, the game arranges the maps into sets of three to play through as rudimentary campaigns, which you can play through against bots. And, bar a brief tutorial, that's it.

In short, it's not a game with any significant offline component. The bots manage as well as they can, but as a relatively complicated game, they tend

to miss a lot of the subtle elements of play, as well as being suckers for some of the more basic traps. While the medics do a good job of supporting you, generally your very limited ability to order them around ("Follow Me", "I need ammo", "I need pick up", "I need health", and that's about it) means that single-player is more about learning the maps and playing with the possibilities of your equipment rather than anything more satisfying.

Which is actually okay, because that's exactly what's needed. While far from rocket science, there's a lot more to Quake Wars than the Battlefield clone it may initially appear from the

"There's a lot more to Quake Wars than the Battlefield clone it initially appears to be"



Like blowing things up? Good for you. You'll love this, then.



Online play is enormous amounts of good old-fashioned fun.

THE STROGG, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

They're all three, as it happens...



AGGRESSOR

The equivalent to the soldier, but with more out-there weapons. Who wouldn't want the Obliterator?



TECHNICIAN

Since the Stroggs are a semi-mech creature, the technician acts like the medic – but also repairs the vehicles.



CONSTRUCTOR

Deals with building, but not upkeep, of the main defensive weaponry of the Strogg.



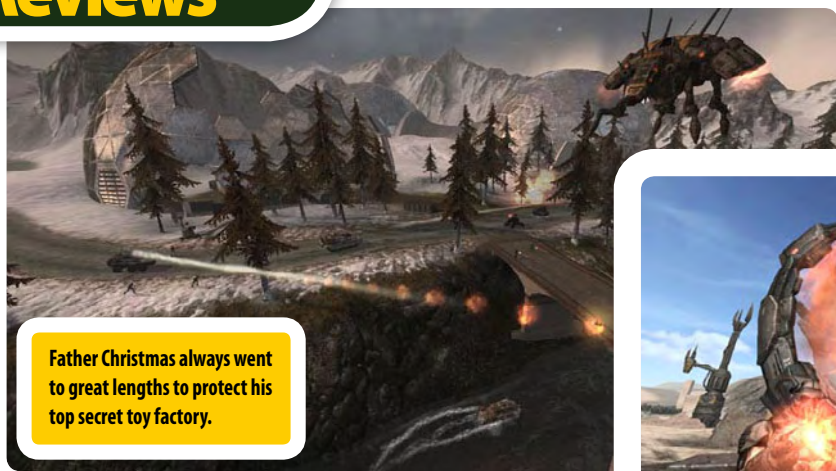
OPPRESSOR

Like Field Ops, but with more panache. Cannons firing a beam of energy across the battlefield tends to do that.



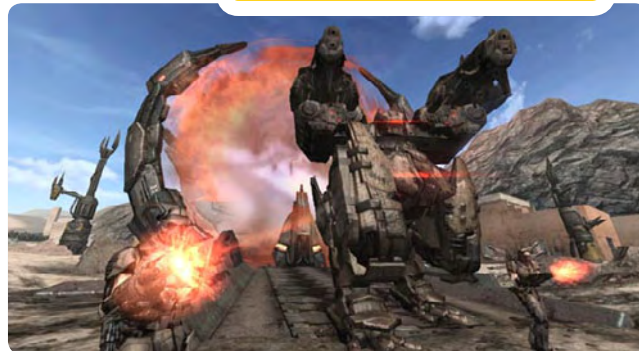
INFILTRATOR

As well as disguise abilities – where they take the image of an opponent – they've got fancy tools, too.



Father Christmas always went to great lengths to protect his top secret toy factory.

The designs for the game's weaponry is as impressive as it's fire power. This baby, for example, looks like it would be more than capable of dishing out some serious damage.



Roll over screen for annotations



> Quake Wars continued

screenshots. Yes, it's about two sides with access to vehicles and with multiple classes... but it's more than that. The two sides – the human GDF and the alien Strogg – are openly asymmetrical, with comparable but non-identical abilities. The same's true of the maps, where one plays defence, the other attacks and they move through objectives in a loose narrative.

For example, a hypothetical progression would be the engineers to construct a bridge, which they have to then drive a heavyweight mobile base

over. It eventually reaches its destination, sets up and blows a hole in the enemy base which is then stormed so bombs can be placed on the generator. If the attackers manage all those stages, they win. If the defenders stop them, they win. Its 16 players may actually pale compared to the much larger battles abstractly supported by Frontlines – its most direct competitor – but despite the size of the levels, since they're concentrated around specific objectives at any time, the game remains intense. In fact, you suspect

with many more players the game would cease to work at all.

And when it works, it's glorious. Take, for example, the sligate map, where one side is trying to open a portal in space. When they do so, they move to a completely different, snowy locale, to try and push towards the final objective. It's deeply dramatic and feels like nothing else. The multiple character classes work well too, with each having a large number of abilities to experiment with, specialised but with enough bite to stand up in a fight.

"Despite the size of the levels, they are concentrated around specific objectives"

But their specialities do lead to some odd quirks. For example, each of the objectives can only be accomplished by one of the character classes. Learning who needs to be in which place is one of many lessons you

GDF: A TOUR OF DUTY

GDF are probably the most accessible to play, if only as you know what their guns do. Which helps.



SOLDIER

Your general fighter, who does that and little else. Apart from planting bombs, just to mix things up a bit.



MEDIC

As well as resurrecting the fallen, they also drop the supply crate to get weapons from.



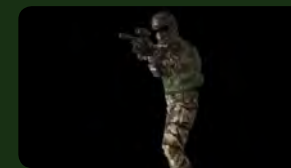
ENGINEER

Repairs vehicles and drops defensive turrets, with each sort only effective against either troops, vehicles or fliers.



FIELD OPS

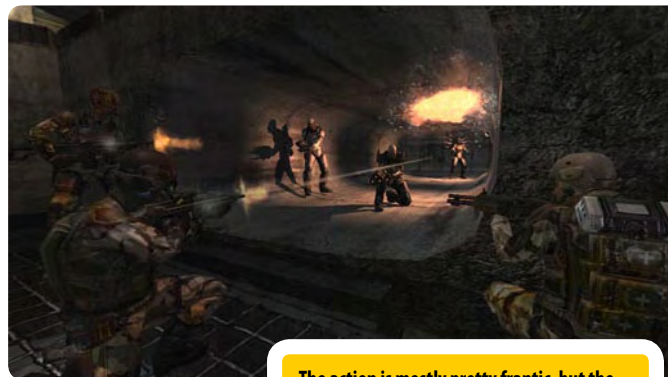
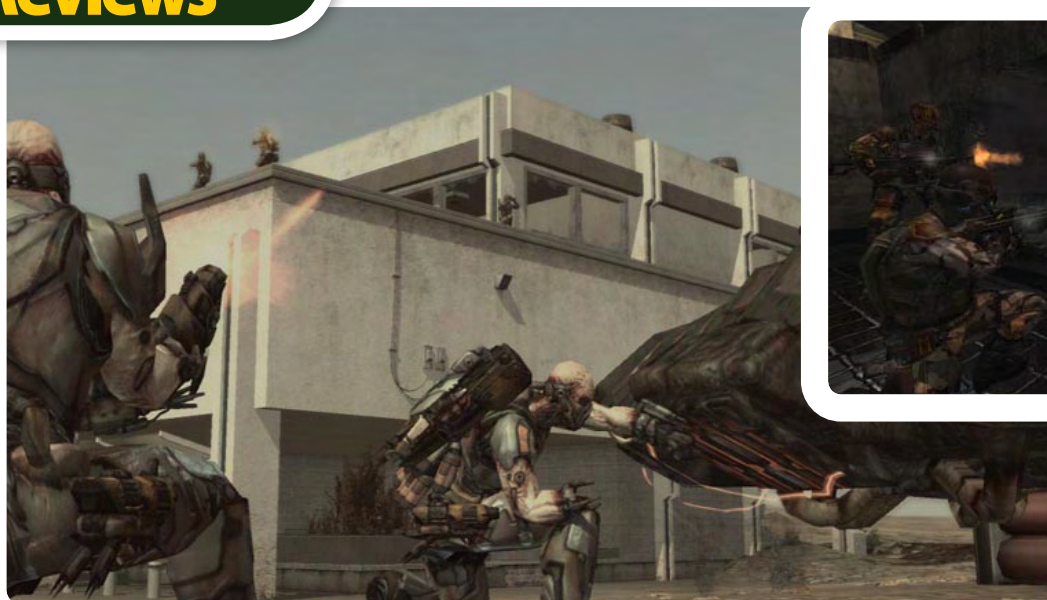
As well as putting field artillery into play they can call down high-power bombardments and plane strikes.



COVERT OPS

Their sniper talents are a sideline to their use in adding radar coverage, as well as hacking terminals.





The action is mostly pretty frantic, but the fairly linear routes through the missions mean that you'll rarely get completely lost in the violent melee.

> Quake Wars continued

need to learn before you can even play, and the reliance on someone to actually realise that means that teamwork is not just encouraged, but actively *required*. The oddest quirk is the win state – it's a set time limit which doesn't alter. So if you're not actually about to get the final state with, say, at least a couple of minutes on the clock, you may as well give up. Compare this to Team Fortress 2, which is a game that manages to keep up the excitement by adding more time when a side gets an objective.

It's relatively minor stuff, however. This is a shooter which demands more

If you don't fancy the online game then you can play against the game's in-built bots.

"It's both tactical and fast-paced, with a host of tactical options available"

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*

So what do I do, then?

New map and... I don't get it

And now the whole team get it



Ah, I get it

Ah, got it now

than the majority of shooters. It's both tactical and fast-paced, with a host of tactical options available, both to the individual and the group. We certainly hope it finds enough people. ●

Kieron Gillen



360Zine Verdict

An action-packed spectacular that's almost literally unbeatable.

- Has own style
- Fascinating levels
- Not exactly accessible

81%

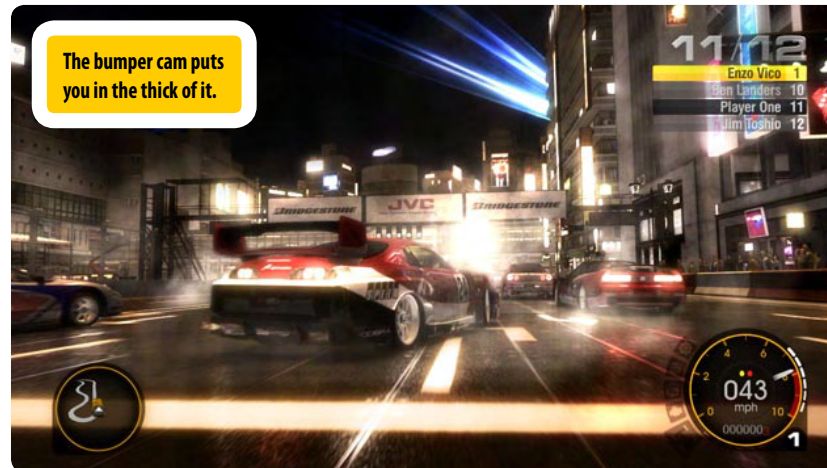


Race Driver: GRID

Gentlemen, start your engines...

The Xbox 360 is blessed with a number of very fine driving games, a number that is about to be increased by one. When it comes to extreme automotive thrills, Codemasters certainly know their crankshafts from their big ends, and this new game is the evolution of the long standing and highly respected TOCA series. It's a game that is highly respected for its driving model anyway, but perhaps less so for the story-based cut-scenes that crept into later games.

Depending on how much you enjoyed them, you'll be pleased/devastated to learn that the cut-scenes



The bumper cam puts you in the thick of it.

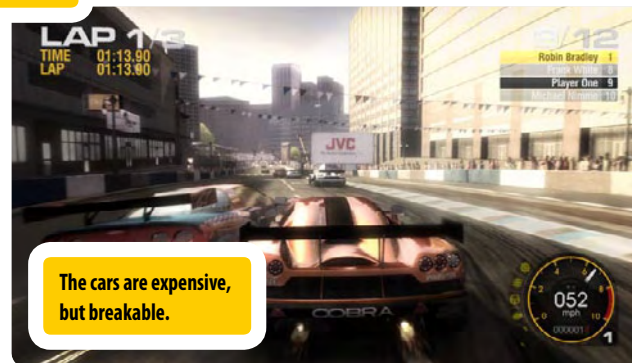
have been dropped, instead putting you at the heart of the action. Yes, you, with various pit workers and teammates referring to you by your

given name, or even by one of a selection of nicknames. It's all part of the personal touch, which also enables you to choose your racing number, along with garish patterns and a range of paint colours for your cars.

First though, in traditional Race Driver fashion, you're thrown into the



Plenty of drifting, if that's your bag.



The cars are expensive, but breakable.

CONTINENTAL SHIFT

Driving licenses and passports required...



America

Europe

Japan

America

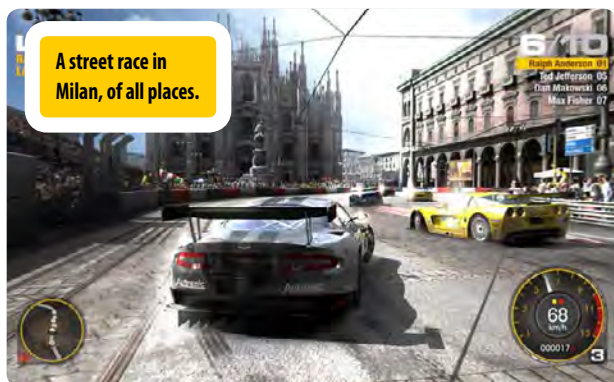
On the American courses you can expect to drive around in some big old muscle cars and tight street races set in such cities as San Francisco, Washington and Long Beach.



Cars can even be bought on eBay, as advertised here.



A street race in Milan, of all places.



> Race Driver: GRID cont.

deep end by being stuck behind the wheel of a beast of a car on the grid of a San Francisco street race. If our experience is anything to go by though, you'll be veering all over the road within seconds, crunching into barriers, taking the wrong turns on a frequent basis and other cars before

they rapidly disappear into the distance, before finally easing your crippled car over the line.

It really doesn't matter, though. Simply finishing the race grants you that all-important license, and an insight into the challenges that face you ahead, not to mention the game's frankly astonishing damage model. While other games are apparently not allowed to offend the car manufacturers by damaging their precious vehicles, Codemasters have somehow got round this issue, and have exploited that privilege in spectacular fashion. In tight races it can be absolute carnage, with cars flying through the air, and collisions leaving metalwork strewn all over the tarmac. The damage is also far more than cosmetic, with various areas of your car suffering as a result. Really knacker it, and you can find yourself limping along in ever-decreasing circles.

Fantastical flashbacks

However, there is hope, thanks to the entirely fantastical Flashback feature, whereby you can rewind time to the point before you ballsed it up, and carry on as if nothing happened. The number of Flashbacks per race depends on the difficulty level, with a no-claims bonus coming into play if you don't use them. This is the mere tip of the iceberg, with sponsorship deals, prize money and buying and selling of cars to be contended with.

The other currency in the game is Reputation, which is how you gain



The traditional first corner carnage.



COMBO
X2

Drift combos make points.



LAP 1/3
TIME LAP 00:15.38
00:15.38



A bit of American muscle.





The in-car view is for the hardcore only.



A nice bit of exhaust flare there.

> Race Driver: GRID cont.

further licenses and therefore access to more events. Those events are spread over three distinct geographical regions, each loosely geared toward the cars and events of the respective locale. This makes for a hugely varied

array of championships, encompassing classic touring cars, open wheel affairs, drift events and even a destruction derby, with the damage engine being stretched to its limits.

There really is something here for everyone, although you inevitably find yourself favouring one region to the detriment of others. The open structure makes this a perfectly feasible strategy, although to open the ultimate global license you will have to open up all nine of the regional ones. There's a lot of racing to be had before that happens though, and you are even joined by a teammate as your garage, and wallet, expands.

True grit

As for the nitty-gritty of the racing itself, it's often an extremely physical

affair, with contact by no means a rarity. Some of the events are a bit niche to be completely honest, but where the game really excels is in the classic touring car events, as you tear round some famous circuits on the absolute brink of control, all the while urged on by your pit crew. And even if you're lagging behind, it's worth hanging in there, as the AI is so realistic that it's not that uncommon to come round a bend and find a four car pile-up right in front of you. And if you don't want to race against computer-controlled cars, naturally the wonders of Xbox Live await.

At its best, GRID really is gripping stuff, and the sheer depth and variety of events almost precludes the need for any other track-based racer. It can sometimes feel that you're not really

making any progress as the arbitrary seasons pass by, but ultimately the fact that they are soon racking up in double figures suggests that the game is doing something very right. In fact, it does pretty much everything right, and in the main is an absolute joy to play. Assuming of course, you like driving games. ●

Ian Morris



360Zine Verdict

At the end of the day, this is the best a man can drive.

- Great damage
- Huge variety
- No weather

88%



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Xbox Live Arcade Round-Up

Another fantastic four available for download today...



"Assault Heroes 2 improves on the original in practically every area"

Assault Heroes 2

Developer: Assault Heroes 2
Publisher: Wanako Games **Price:** 800 MP (~£6.80)

If you liked the first Assault Heroes game, the chances are you'll love this, as it's pretty much more of the same. With better physics, more vehicles, larger bosses, and more levels to play through, Assault Heroes 2 improves on the original in practically every area. With a new

weapon at your disposal (an ice thrower type thing, that freezes your enemies) and much more spectacular environments, this is well worth a look – the only downer being the emphasis on single-player achievements in what's meant to be a co-op shooter.

- Great co-op
- Loads of levels
- Confusing achievements

Together, unbeaten **89%**

Lost Cities

Developer: Sierra Online
Publisher: Sierra Online Shanghai
Price: 800 MP (~£6.80)

So, if you're the sort of gamer who prefers solitaire to Gears of War, then Lost Cities the game for you. Based on a popular card game, Lost Cities is intricately themed around adventure and exploration. There are five cities on the board, and you'll have to place a series of investment cards to prepare you for your exploration (giving you a minus score), before placing expedition cards to try and get yourself back in the black. It's an interesting game, but its complexity may be off-putting for some gamers.



- Complex
- Good tutorial
- Evil AI

Snap! **75%**



Wits and Wagers

Developer: Microsoft Games Studios **Publisher:** Hidden Path Entertainment **Price:** 800 MP (~£6.80)

Wits and Wagers is a party game that the entire family can enjoy, without really knowing the answer to any of the questions. At the start of each round you're presented with a question, which will have a numerical answer. After picking your answer, you then go to the next screen, where you place your bets on who's going to come the closest (but not more than) the answer. When played with four people, this is a blast, and with more question packs to come, it's just gonna get better.

- Accessible
- Family-friendly
- Blatant guesswork

Fun for everyone **90%**

Penny Arcade Adventures

Developer: Hothead Games
Publisher: Hothead Games **Price:** 1600 MP (~£13.60)

Or, to give it its full name, Penny Arcade Adventures: On the Rain-Slick Precipice of Darkness: Episode One. Based on the popular Penny Arcade webcomic, what lies underneath the silly title is a solid Paper Mario-style RPG, complete with turn-based battles and beautiful graphics. Unfortunately, the game tries too hard to be funny, leading to too many raised eyebrow moments, and at 1600 points for five hours of gameplay, this is the XBLA's most expensive game so far.



- Solid game
- Too expensive
- Not funny

Solid game, silly name **70%**

In **360Zine** Issue 20

ALONE IN THE DARK

PLUS!

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HELLBOY BATTLEFIELD: BAD COMPANY
GUITAR HERO: AEROSMITH SMASH COURT TENNIS

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news for gamers

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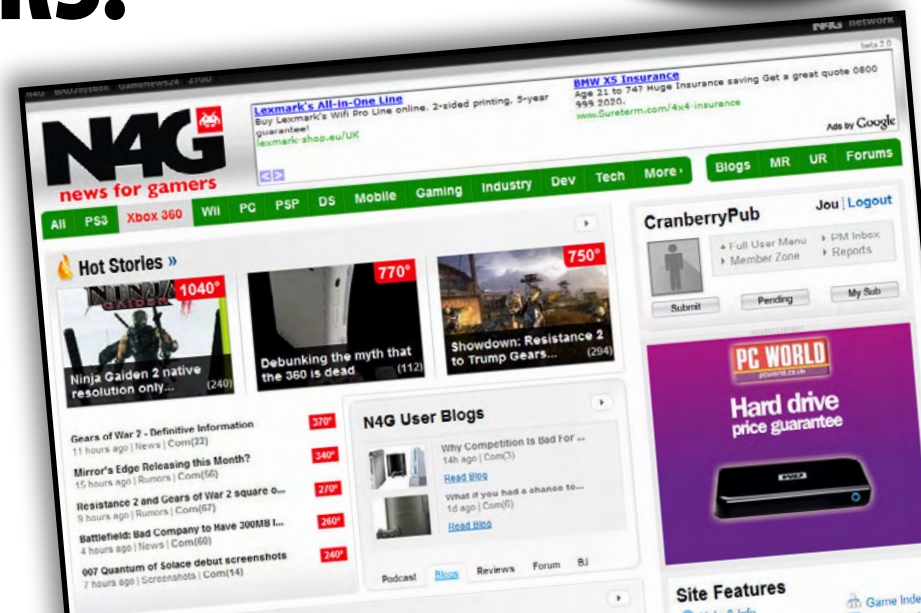
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-  Exit.
-  Read the Ninja Gaiden II Supplement.



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NINJA GAIDEN II

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Tomonobu Itagaki...





Welcome

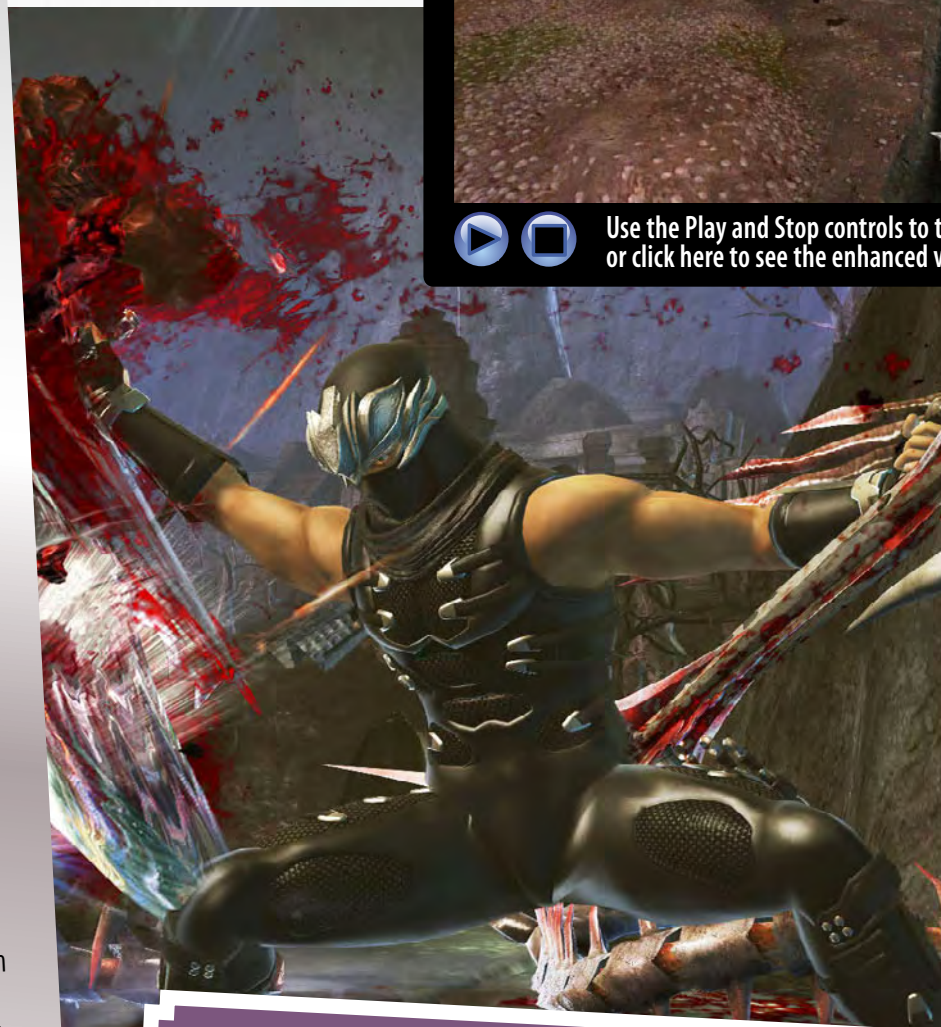
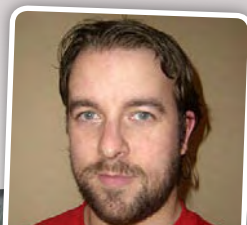
It might surprise some people to learn that the Ninja Gaiden series didn't start in 2004 on the Xbox, but in 1988 in the arcades of Japan. Tecmo's side-scrolling platform beat-em-up shared a resemblance to Konami's Castlevania series, but provided a faster-paced, more addictive experience. Even back then, it was renowned for its difficulty. Yet that toughness didn't ever feel cheap - Gaiden was always scrupulously fair, just very hard indeed. It was a game that rewarded sharp reactions and required players to practice over and over, learning its stages and enemies until they could be beaten easily. It spawned two sequels on the NES (so this isn't the first game to be called Ninja Gaiden II) and then disappeared into the night like the titular assassins.

Fast-forward sixteen years, and Tecmo decided a modern-day update was in order. Legendary producer Tomonobu Itagaki and his development team, the appropriately-named Team Ninja, created a modern masterpiece that lived up to the original in many ways, providing a faithful update that made the move to 3D look easy. Again, it had the mix of combat and platform-based action, and again it had the series' sky-high difficulty. Though a few mainstream journalists were put off, hardcore gamers lapped it up, with critics garlanding the game with fulsome praise.

It was therefore no surprise when a sequel was announced, though its host platform was a head-turner. Available exclusively on Xbox 360, Itagaki-san boldly stated that it's the only console which could do the game justice. Join us in this special extensive hands-on look at the game and find out if he's right, and if Ninja Gaiden II can do the seemingly impossible and improve upon its outstanding last-generation predecessor...

Enjoy the issue!

Chris Schilling



"Can Ninja Gaiden II do the seemingly impossible and improve upon its outstanding last-generation predecessor?"



Use the Play and Stop controls to the left, or click here to see the enhanced version!



CONTROL →





Publisher:

Microsoft Game Studios

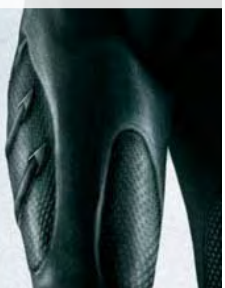
Developer:

Team Ninja

Heritage: Dead or Alive series, Ninja Gaiden

Link: www.xbox.com/ng2

ETA: June 6th



Ninja Gaiden II

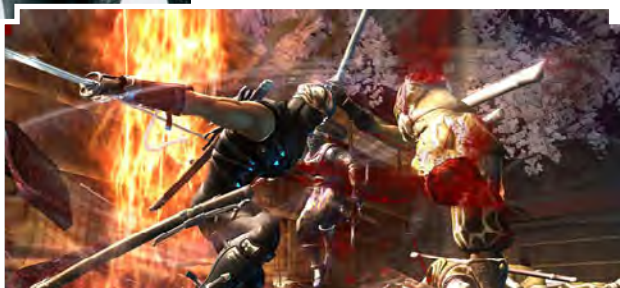
"The path of the ninja is not for the faint of heart"

Ryu's return - the world's toughest ninja assassin makes a spectacular entrance on Xbox 360...

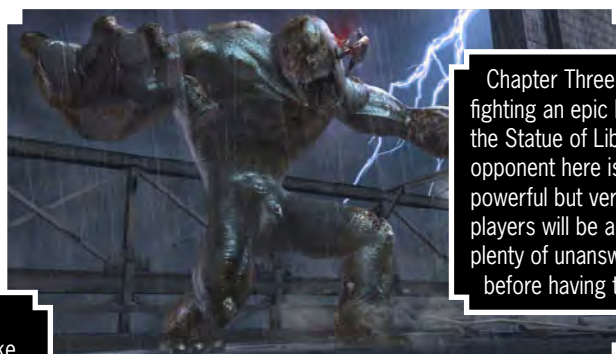
When you start a new game of Ninja Gaiden II, you're immediately given a choice. Do you choose the path of the Acolyte, Warrior, Mentor or Master Ninja? The first – ostensibly the game's easiest difficulty level – gives you a warning. "The path of the ninja is not for the faint of heart. This route is for those who walk it for the first time." The second also warns you – "proceed with caution!" And even though this is the game's default difficulty, the warning is no joke.

Anyone concerned that Ninja Gaiden II's difficulty would be toned down to appeal to a wider audience can rest easy - the Warrior path is going to kick your ass more times than you ever thought possible, even if you're a series veteran.

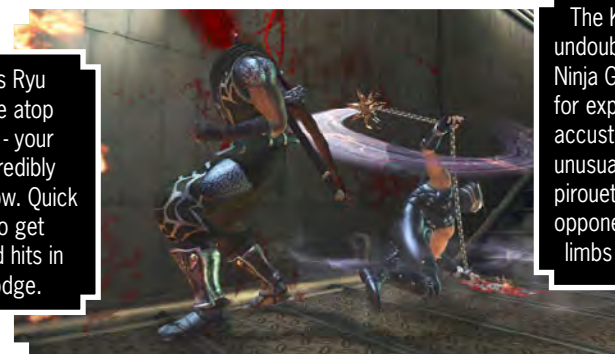
Yet for those who found the original Xbox game a little too much like hard work, Acolyte provides a more accessible - yet equally frenzied and frantic - Ninja Gaiden experience. Make no mistake, though this is effectively the game's easy mode, your gran's not going to



He's not getting up from that one - though certain enemies will attempt suicide kills, even when they're shy of limbs. Make sure everyone's dead before you move on.



Chapter Three sees Ryu fighting an epic battle atop the Statue of Liberty - your opponent here is incredibly powerful but very slow. Quick players will be able to get plenty of unanswered hits in before having to dodge.



The Kusari-gama will undoubtedly provide some of Ninja Gaiden II's best moments for expert players. Get accustomed to using this unusual weapon and you'll be pirouetting around your opponents, casually lopping off limbs left, right and centre.



Weapons of choice

Evisceration for beginners...



Melee

Projectile

Ninpo

Melee

The melee weapons are the ones you'll use the most throughout the game, and there are plenty of them - all fully upgradeable to become utterly devastating (as opposed to just extremely deadly). Ryu can whirl the Lunar Staff around to take out assailants quickly, and also lunge forward, repeatedly jabbing the sharp end into enemy stomachs - very handy in those narrow corridors. The Falcon's Talons are a very short range weapon, but they can tear foes to absolute shreds, while the Kusari-gama chain and sickle can be used in some amazingly violent combos, tearing off limbs or bludgeoning enemies to death with the weighty spiked ball on the upgraded version.

> Ninja Gaiden II continued

get anywhere. The franchise's legendary difficulty remains intact - it's merely rock hard rather than too hard this time.

When you do pluck up the courage to press start to begin, perhaps the first thing you notice is the quality of the graphics. As protagonist Ryu Hayabusa plunges down from a skyscraper in Sky City Tokyo (the game's opening level) to rescue a young woman in the process of being kidnapped, the amazing character models and stunning environments combine to provide a treat for the eyes. Start playing and it's even better - this game, particularly in the right hands,



Tiger's Fang and Dragon's Claw are twin swords which tend to make a bloody mess of any rivals foolish enough to get within range.

"In the right hands it's poetry in motion"

is poetry in motion. Running at a silky smooth sixty frames per second, it's incredibly fast and slick, with the beautifully animated Ryu making literal mincemeat of his

opponents.

Ah, yes - the gore. A while ago, when speaking about his intentions for Gaiden II, Director Tomonobu Itagaki repeatedly stated his intentions to make every battle feel important - like a fight to the death. And it does, it really does. Your armed foes attack from all angles, right from the outset, in an aggressive manner that'll terrify inexperienced newcomers. You have to have your wits about you immediately - making sure you're ready with a block, parry and counter for your opponents' vicious assaults. Time it right, and you'll pierce their defences, showering blood everywhere. Hit them again and again with fast attacks, and you might just see a few limbs fall to the floor, splashing claret across the



Use the Play and Stop controls to the left, or click here to see the enhanced version!





> Ninja Gaiden II continued

floor and Ryu's Dragon Blade. Yet don't think that a legless opponent is completely 'armless, too - these guys are like Terminators, and will absolutely not stop, ever, until you are dead. They'll drag their bloody carcasses towards you as you face off against their comrades and perform suicide attacks - pinning you down, stabbing you and exploding, sending body parts flying across the screen. Like the presumed-dead baddie in a teen horror movie, you can't turn your back on them for a second. Ryu has more than one trick up his sleeve to deal with such horrors, though - his more powerful attacks can often decapitate enemies in one brutal swipe, while close-up obliteration techniques see him slice opponents clean in two.

Kick Flick

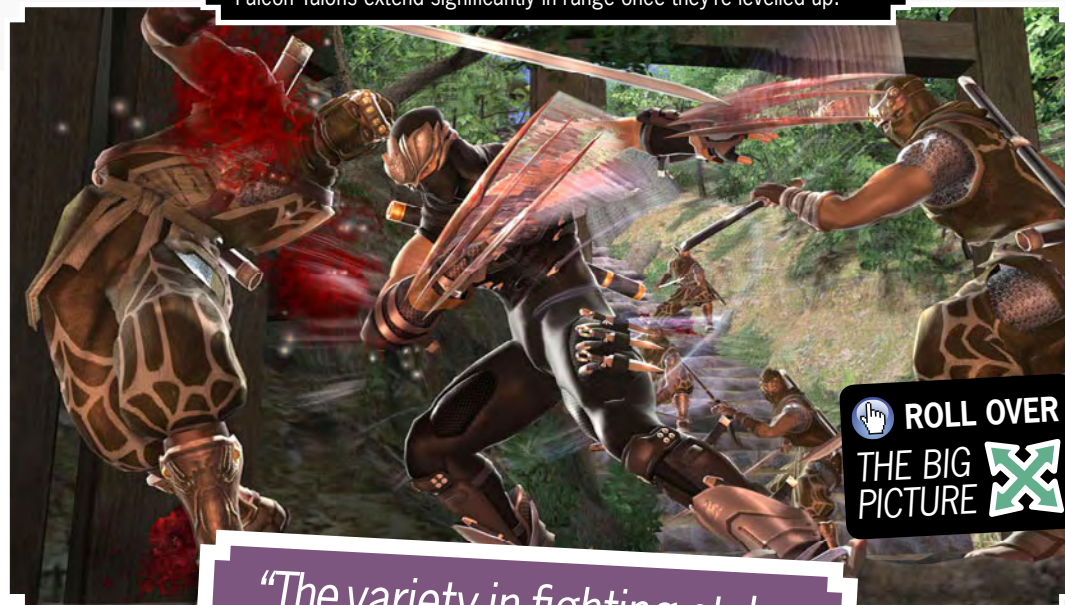
One of the game's most innovative features is the Ninja Cinema mode. You're able to record footage of your play, which can be saved to your hard drive and uploaded Xbox LIVE if you want to show off your skills. If ever a game was suited to replays, it's this one - despite the blood, there's an almost balletic grace to the action when performed by the most talented combatants. You can even add a 'Kurosawa filter' which pays homage to the legendary film director by turning everything black and white and adding a grainy filter to make it look like an old ninja movie.

They won't come back from that one. One wave down, and the rooftops are painted blood red, with gruesome evidence of your struggle spread for tens of yards in every direction. One group down, several hundred to go...

This might sound a little off-puttingly difficult, but it's simply a case of learning the ropes, and learning them fast. Ryu can pick up scrolls which teach him new techniques, all of which are hugely useful in battle. Even something like the wall run - a Prince of Persia-esque moment of magic which sees Ryu sprint along vertical surfaces with great ease - can be utilised in combat as well as the game's platforming sections. It's quite something to jump onto a wall behind an opponent's head, spring back down and plunge a sword into his torso, instantly killing him. Yet though there are a wealth of different manoeuvres to learn, they're all executed very simply - the controls are amazingly intuitive and accessible, yet flexible enough to allow for a variety in fighting styles unmatched by any other current generation title. Devil May Cry? Well Dante probably would weep to see Ryu at his best.

Once you're used to spending most of your time blocking with the

While it might take time to amass enough currency to upgrade, the Falcon Talons extend significantly in range once they're levelled up.



"The variety in fighting styles is unmatched by any other current generation title"



Genshin is the game's first boss, but that's not the last you'll see of him. His Black Spider Ninja Clan are Ryu's main rivals in Ninja Gaiden II.





> Ninja Gaiden II continued

left trigger and timing dodges with moves of the analogue stick - so each enemy sword thrust misses its target - you can start showboating. Or, if you're surrounded by foes with seemingly no way out, then maybe it's time to pull out the ninpo.

This magical power allows Ryu to perform special attacks, usually on groups of opponents, or on the game's huge boss characters: simply hold Y and B and you'll be able to launch a powerful fireball - The Art of the Inferno - which will immolate several assailants within the vicinity, while The Art Of The Wind Blades sees razor sharp vacuum waves dice your enemies to pieces. Seeing four or five foes

reduced to piles of useless flesh is worryingly gratifying.

You might be best saving your energy for the game's guardians, however, which are some of the hardest opponents you'll ever fight in any videogame. Sky City's boss is a gigantic spider demon who will decimate all but the most careful players on their first go. But learn his attacks and you'll soon be lopping off his legs - though it'll make even

The plot involves a female CIA operative trying to stop the enemy clan from resurrecting the Archfiend - though the cutscenes are kept to a minimum so the game can maintain one hell of a fast pace.



"Some of the hardest opponents you'll ever fight in any videogame"

Roll over screen for annotations



You can quite literally paint the town red with Ninja Gaiden II - it's a gore-fiend's delight.



> Ninja Gaiden II continued

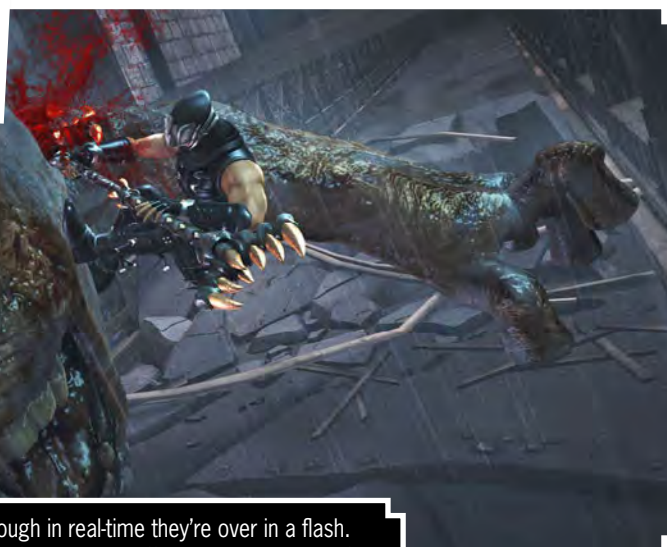
the most hardened gamer's jaw drop when he arrives mid-way through the next stage as a mini-boss.

Chapters Two, Three and Four see equally epic scraps, and they're not just reserved for the end of the levels. The graphically-stunning, rain-lashed New York of Chapter Three sees a gigantic bat-eating demon rise up from the ground. You might think he was a little easy to defeat compared to some of your tougher battles at that stage, but then

two more appear, and you realise Itagaki has just upped the ante once more.

With that in mind, it's a good thing that you're able to save and regenerate your health at reasonable intervals - these rest spots aren't spread quite as thinly as before, and are positioned more fairly. No traipsing back through several roomfuls of foes once you've been beaten by a boss - here you'll be able to restart from a much closer position. You'll get more assistance from prodigiously eyebrowed old man Muramasa, whose shop returns - in here you can buy health items and herbs which restore some of your ki (used to execute those powerful ninpo moves), as well as upgrading your weapons. Talking of

"Team Ninja have produced another action masterpiece"



The close-ups look spectacular, though in real-time they're over in a flash. You'll need sharp eyes to spot some of the goriest effects, though some of the more dramatic kills are clear enough to make you wince.



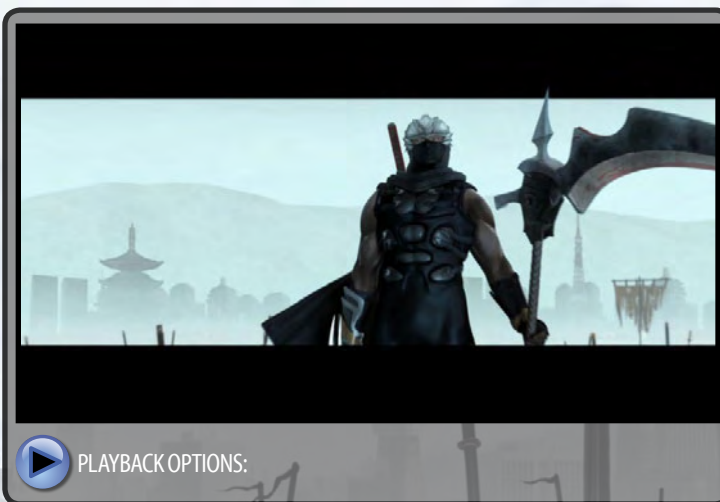
which, there's an impressive range of ways to rip your enemies to shreds, from the standard Dragon Sword through the long and heavy, but slightly unwieldy Lunar Staff. The Falcon's Talons are a particular highlight - turning Ryu into a Wolverine-like menace - handy, considering the many vulpine foes he has to deal with at certain stages.

Ninja Gaiden II might not be an easy game, but it does plenty to make the player more comfortable - so you know that if you do perish, it's never anyone's fault but your own. The camera can now be centred behind Ryu by pressing the right trigger, so you'll always have the optimum viewpoint of your surroundings, while the quick weapon-change and ninpo select on the d-pad is an absolute godsend, keeping things flowing much better

rather than removing you from the game and taking you into a menu. We can say with absolute confidence that Itagaki-san and Team Ninja have produced yet another action masterpiece. It improves on the original in every conceivable way, and is sure to please both newcomers and veterans alike when it's released on June 6th. Put simply, we can't wait...●



NINJA GAIDEN



PLAYBACK OPTIONS:

THE FINE LINE BETWEEN HONOUR AND VENGEANCE WILL BE CROSSED BY ONE.

HAYABUSA RETURNS IN THE ONLY TRUE SEQUEL TO NINJA GAIDEN. EXCLUSIVELY ON THE XBOX 360.
FOUR DIFFICULTY LEVELS, FROM ACOLYTE TO MASTER NINJA.



Microsoft



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Jump in.

XBOX 360 LIVE



CONTROL →



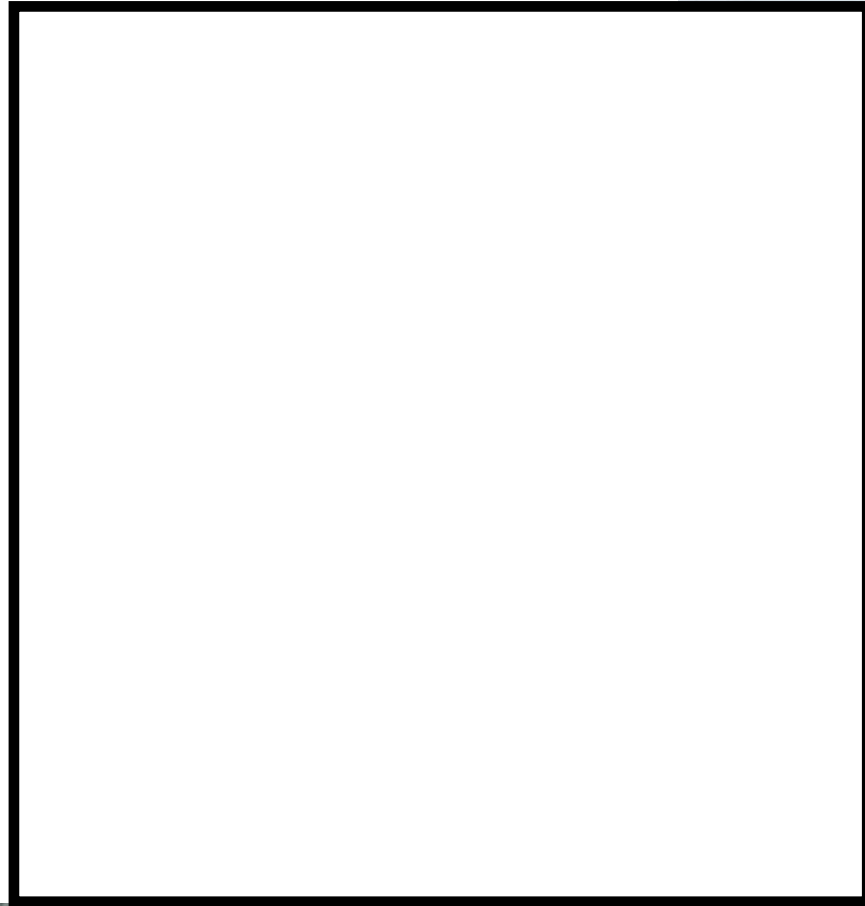


WIN! AN XBOX 360

An Xbox 360 signed by Ninja Gaiden II producer Tomonobu Itagaki is up for grabs. Five runners-up win copies of the game. Simply answer the question for your chance to win...



Competition closes June 30th 2008. For standard T&C, see www.gamerzines.com.





Stay Tuned

For budding assassins everywhere, the official site will train you in the ways of the ninja!

If you want to keep up to date with Ninja Gaiden II, count down the days until release, or simply find out more about the game, then the official web page really is a site to behold. There are plenty of things to keep you busy - the Embrace The Blade wallpaper generator allows you to select from a host of weapons to create your own customised NGII desktop, while Release Your Wrath allows you to use an Xbox 360

get them ingrained into your head before the game arrives.

Even better is the ability to use these moves in a series of challenges, facilitated by Xbox.com via email - you're given five seconds to input as many techniques as you can, and can then view a video sequence showing the moves you used against your online opponent. After you've both taken your turn, the winner is revealed, with the site tracking your total wins and losses.

controller to enter moves. A perfect way to practice your fighting techniques and

Fancy showing off about your online achievements? You can create a screensaver which adds the blade of your defeated opponent each time you win a battle, while a Facebook kill counter will allow you to brag about

your prowess while networking with pals. Finally, there's an embeddable widget which keeps track of your win count - simply copy and paste the code into your website to show the world you're a master ninja!



Pull off as many powerful attacks as you can before the timer counts down to win online battles. Watching replays of a particularly impressive combo is a uniquely satisfying thrill.



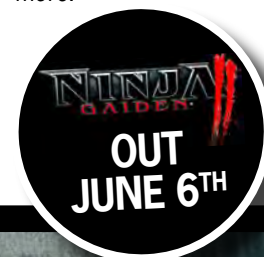
The Ninja Gaiden II site is an invaluable reference point for the game, and a huge help to newcomers learning the ropes.

Ninja network

Not content with providing a fantastic interactive experience on its website, Microsoft is also bringing fresh Ninja Gaiden II content to mobile phones. So if, like Ryu Hayabusa, you're always on the move, you can still keep up to date with the game. As well as a brief overview, Microsoft has provided a wallpaper and trailer to download, with a host of action-packed screenshots for you to gawp at the game's gorgeous graphics. Finally, there's a number of links to related products like excellent RPGs Lost Odyssey and Mass Effect, and a look at the forthcoming Too Human. **Text 'Xbox' to 80880** to find out more.



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